



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

April 7, 2020

Dear Spring Bear Permit holder:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, we are not opening the spring bear hunts until May 5th at the earliest to keep people from traveling across the state.

There is a potential for all spring bear hunting to be closed, and we will keep assessing the situation as we receive additional information.

That said, we wanted to clarify:

- Our current thinking is that WDFW will give hunters at least 48 hours notice of a season opening date. This will allow you to evaluate your options and make a decision prior to the new opening date.
- However, due to the unprecedented nature of this situation, we are evaluating if there are other options that may allow for a season to start sooner than with 48 hours notice but that still include a reasonable opportunity to permit holders to seek a refund and/or point restoration.
- **Our recommendation is to delay making a refund and/or point restoration request until a decision is made regarding any potential season opportunity. This will preserve your options.**

Any time before the season opens:

- You can choose to get a refund (cost of bear license, bear tag) and will get your spring bear points restored. To do this you must contact customer service. In this case you would not have a tag for fall bear unless you purchased one at a later date.
- Alternatively, you can choose to get just your points restored (keeping your bear license and tag for fall bear hunting). In this case, all previous points, plus the one you would have received this year would be restored.
- We are not currently offering refunds for bear tags included with any combination license package.

If you choose to hold on to your tag and permit and we are able to open the season, you will then be able to participate in the remaining spring bear hunt if one opens. You will be given a minimum of 48 hours to make a decision. However, if no spring season is offered, you will have the opportunity to receive a refund if you do not wish to hunt in the fall or request your spring bear points be restored (thus keeping your tag for the fall season).

We understand that these closures are frustrating. We support hunting and also want to support the health and wellbeing of all Washingtonians. For the latest information around our response to impacts from the spread of COVID-19, please continue to visit <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/covid-19-updates>. While there is the potential for these hunts to reopen on May 5th, there is also the potential for all spring bear hunts to be delayed or closed in their entirety. If the season is closed in its entirety, we will consider point restoration at that time. We will keep assessing the situation as we receive additional information.

If you have any questions, please contact the Wildlife Program customer service desk at 360-902-2515 or by email at wildthing@dfw.wa.gov. Good luck during your spring black bear special permit season.

Sincerely,

Anis Aoude
Game Division Manager